

pursuit of peace



DIRECTTALKS The key to a sustainable peace

Israel is committed to a two-state solution—a Jewish state living side-by-side in peace with a demilitarized Palestinian state. The United States must send a clear message that this goal can only be achieved through direct negotiations between the parties. Unhelpful resolutions at the United Nations Security Council and unilateral Palestinian actions at other international bodies will only undermine the prospects for peace. The United States should work together with Israel to counter the surge in Palestinian terrorist activities and urge the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table.

Direct, bilateral negotiations are the only viable path to achieve an enduring peace.

A viable deal can only be reached if both parties enter negotiations willingly, feel vested in the peace process, and intend to implement a solution. No accord will endure without support from both Israeli and Palestinian leadership, along with the populations they represent. If the international community abandons negotiations and yields to Palestinian demands, irrespective of legitimate Israeli concerns, Palestinian intransigence will only be encouraged and the prospects for Palestinian statehood undermined.

The Palestinians are attempting to bypass direct negotiations.

In December 2014, Jordan introduced a Palestinian-drafted resolution at the United Nations Security Council that advanced only Palestinian positions. The resolution sought an Israeli withdrawal from the entire West Bank and parts of Jerusalem by the end of 2017—without regard for the security situation or Israeli claims. In fact, Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas has signed 20 international treaties and conventions on behalf of the “State of Palestine.” Measures such as these violate the fundamental principle of the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Accords, in which both sides committed to resolving final status issues only through direct bilateral negotiations.

Palestinian moves at the International Criminal Court (ICC) hinder peace.

After signing the Rome Statute, the “State of Palestine” became an official member of the ICC in April 2015. The Palestinians then began pursuing war crimes charges against Israel, and the ICC prosecutor has opened a preliminary examination into Israel’s conduct during its 2014 defensive war against Hamas. These one-sided actions exacerbate hostility and hinder the peace process.

Israel's pursuit of peace

timeline

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Jewish community in then-British Mandatory Palestine expressed its desire to live in peace with its Arab neighbors. Since its founding amid the ashes of war, Israel has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to make bold, painful concessions, such as withdrawing from land and forcibly removing its citizens, in order to achieve peace.



Jews Accept Peel Commission Report

Israel's future prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, accepts the recommendations of the official British Peel Commission report as a basis for negotiations, which allocated a very small percentage of Palestine to a Jewish state. The Arab governments reject the plan.



A State Is Born

Declaring Independence, Ben-Gurion says Israel will "extend the hand of peace to all its neighbors" as well as grant "full and equal citizenship and due representation" for the non-Jewish population. In response, the armies of five Arab states invade.



Israel Signs Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty

Following Camp David accord, Israel agrees to return the entire Sinai Peninsula, an area almost three times the size of Israel, to Egypt. In 1979, Egypt and Israel sign a peace treaty—the first between Israel and an Arab country.



Israel Establishes Peace with Jordan

Jordan's King Hussein and Israel's Yitzhak Rabin sign a peace treaty, making Jordan the second Arab state to recognize Israel.

1918-1919

Early Zionists Reach Out to Arabs

Chaim Weizmann, who was to become the first president of Israel, leads a mission to Cairo to express the Jewish people's desire to live in harmony with the Arabs.



1937

1947

Jews Accept U.N. Partition Plan

The Jewish community of Palestine and Zionists worldwide accept the partition plan approved by the United Nations that would create a Jewish state alongside an Arab state. The Arab states reject the U.N. resolution and prepare for war.



1948

1967

Israel's Offer to Withdraw Is Rejected

Days after successfully defending itself in the Six-Day War, Israel offers to return captured territories in return for peace treaties. The Arab states reject the offer.



1979

1993

Israel Signs Oslo Agreement

Israel grants the Palestinians unprecedented authority over Gaza and parts of the West Bank, and starts talks aimed at ending the conflict with the Palestinians.



1994



ISRAEL EXTENDS HAND IN PEACE AT ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE

At the U.S.-sponsored Annapolis conference, Israel reiterates its commitment to peace negotiations with the Palestinians and Arab states.



ISRAEL MAKES HISTORIC PEACE OFFER

Israel accepts U.S. President Bill Clinton's proposals for peace with the Palestinians. Israel would cede all of Gaza, 96 percent of the West Bank and additional territory from within pre-1967 Israel, recognize an independent Palestinian state and cede parts of eastern Jerusalem to serve as the Palestinian capital.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat rejects the offer amidst the worst wave of Palestinian terrorism in Israel's history.



ISRAEL MAKES FAR-REACHING OFFER TO END THE CONFLICT

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offers PA President Mahmoud Abbas 93.5% of the West Bank with land swaps. Abbas did not respond to the offer. In a later TV interview, Abbas said that he "rejected [the offer] out of hand."



ISRAEL REPEATEDLY CALLS FOR DIRECT TALKS WITH PALESTINIANS

Prime Minister Netanyahu repeatedly calls for the Palestinians to return to direct peace talks. Palestinian leaders rebuff Israeli entreaties, set preconditions for talks and turn to the United Nations for recognition of statehood.



ISRAEL CONTINUES TO CALL FOR PEACE TALKS WITH PALESTINIANS

Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to call for direct peace talks with no preconditions. Palestinian leadership instead attempts to isolate Israel and seek achievements at the U.N. and other international bodies.

2000

ISRAEL UNILATERALLY WITHDRAWS FROM LEBANON

With backing from the United States, Israel unilaterally withdraws from southern Lebanon after 18 years of maintaining a security zone to prevent attacks on its northern communities. Israel's withdrawal is met with a massive military buildup by Hezbollah.



2005

ISRAEL REMOVES ALL SOLDIERS, CITIZENS FROM GAZA

With U.S. support, Israel takes a historic step and unilaterally withdraws from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, providing the Palestinians the chance to self-govern and prove their intention to fight terrorism.



2007

2008

2009

ISRAEL ENDORSES DEMILITARIZED PALESTINIAN STATE; IMPLEMENTS SETTLEMENT MORATORIUM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally endorses the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state and implements a 10-month moratorium on the construction of new homes in the West Bank. Palestinians refuse to hold talks despite these gestures.



2011-2012

2013-2014

2015-2016

PEACE TALKS BREAK DOWN FOLLOWING FORMATION OF PALESTINIAN UNITY GOVERNMENT WITH HAMAS

Israel makes painful sacrifices to secure the resumption of peace talks, including releasing 78 Palestinian terrorists. Ultimately, the talks failed to yield any tangible results and break down when PA President Mahmoud Abbas enters into a unity government with the terrorist group Hamas.





To enhance the prospects for peace,
the United States should remain committed
to the principles that guided previous
successful negotiations:

Talks must be direct and bilateral.

A solution cannot be imposed
on the parties.

Both sides must be willing
to make key compromises.

Disagreements should
be resolved privately.

The United States must support
and work closely with Israel.
